

CONSCRIPTION ADVICE SERVICE

ANNUAL REPORT 1988/1989

INTRODUCTION

At the CAS AGM in September last year, there was a recognition that the Advice Service was weak and ineffectual and required some desperate revitalising. Amongst the problems isolated were the following:

- CAS was difficult to get hold of in the event of the advice-seeker being lucky enough to see an advertisement, i.e. advertising was patchy and the contact system worked poorly.
- Recruitment of new members was minimal and the core of active workers was too small to effectively reproduce the organisation.
- Counselling skills and knowledge were concentrated in the heads of two or three individuals.
- Input, feedback and support from other organisations was minimal.

The Working Group attempted to address these problems by drawing up a set of tasks for the year. In order of priority, these were:

1. To train more counsellors
2. To establish an effective contact/referral system
3. To develop an appropriate and attractive image and advertising profile.
4. To develop educational programmes that could be taken to organisations, church and school groups and university campuses on the rights and options of the conscript.

THE YEAR'S WORK

One year later, CAS is a much stronger organisation with a clearer sense of its role and its possibilities. We have however a long way to go before we start realising our real potential.

Our successes and failings are best analysed in terms of the tasks we set ourselves.

1. Training more counsellors

A counsellors training workshop was held over six evenings in March and was attended by upwards of 30 people. ECC, UCT, CAS, CSG, Stellenbosch and the Black Sash were all well represented. OASSA played an invaluable role in their running of the sessions on counselling and we are very grateful for their contribution. The workshop was efficiently run and well-presented and positive feedback was received. The workshop had a number of important spin-offs:

- It enabled CAS to build a positive image amongst sympathetic organisations and helped impress the importance of service and advice-type work upon a broader group.
- It provided the impetus for CAS collating its knowledge and learnings of the past few years in an accessible form.
- It gave a basic training in counselling to a broad group, some of whom agreed to become CAS counsellors and thus established the basis for upgrading the referral/contact system.

It was recognised that the training course only provided a basic training and that counsellors needed to develop their skills on an on-going basis. The intention was that the monthly counsellors

meetings would be the vehicle for this further training programme. This vehicle has been somewhat slow in getting started and only two sessions have been held since April. Factors that have contributed were delays in the installation of the telephone at the office and in the slowness of calls to the office, which meant that many counsellors were not counselling anybody which made skills upgrading just a little superfluous. A major task we have now is keeping our counsellors interested and on the ball and we also need to consider institutionalising two-person counselling which would enable counsellors to give each other feedback and would add the ideas of an additional person to the problem at hand.

2. A contact/referral system

It became apparent that the only satisfactory contact/referral system involved establishing an office which would be staffed at set times on a regular basis. We were very fortunate to acquire a very accessible and user-friendly venue at the LAMLA offices in Mowbray. Two counsellors are on duty at the office from 5.30pm to 7.30pm each night Mondays to Fridays and they are able to deal with the majority of problems that advice-seekers raise. There is a roster of lawyers and psychologists with whom they can consult or refer the advice-seeker on to if the need arises.

3. Advertising and image

Our advertising has been inadequate. Mitigating factors in this regard include a financial squeeze earlier in the year and a failure of various media-skilled persons who had undertaken to do work for us to deliver the goods. For the Service to develop and prosper, it requires many people to make use of its services. This is only going to happen if it is widely known as a place where the reluctant conscript can get sympathetic and professional advice and information. Advertising is a key element in this process and must be a key project of the immediate future. At present our advertising consists essentially of classified ads in the main suburban weeklies and the Weekly Mail and calling cards that we have circulated through sympathetic organisations and at public meetings.

4. Education

Our broader public educational work has been a low priority. The Service has however embarked upon a video project on the options of the conscript in conjunction with the Churches Alternative Services Project that should provide a very useful educational resource by early 1989. Other broader educational work has included participation in the "Know Your Rights" forums of ECC where CAS counsellors provided important inputs and in planning an information workshop for parents in conjunction with the ECC schools group.

We regard public education work as a matter of priority for the future. The importance and need for this work was demonstrated by the public response to the "Know Your Rights" focus. Seeking individual advice with CAS is often the last resort of the desperate conscript and it seems an obvious truth that as our counselling service gets established, that

we need to develop our proactive educational work so that situations where conscription crises are exacerbated by ignorance of rights and options are reduced.

NATIONAL

At a national level, CAS has been making slow but steady progress. CAS's, in different stages of development, now exist in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Grahamstown, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Many of these groups have recently run training courses similar to the one Cape Town organised. National co-ordination, that has often been flimsy in the past, has been put on a solid footing and a national co-ordination meeting held on 16 and 17 September was characterised by remarkable consensus regarding the role of CAS and the urgency of getting the Service properly established nationally. A national conference for all CAS members and counsellors has been proposed for February next year.

THE FUTURE

The past year has seen growing resistance to conscription. Ivan Toms and David Bruce are in prison for refusing to serve in the SADF and other conscientious objectors will probably be joining them shortly. In August 143 objectors publicly declared their refusal to serve in the SADF. There are indications that the number of conscripts who fail to report for military service is increasing, although the SADF no longer releases such statistics. The concept of non-military alternative service for all conscientious objectors has gathered wide support and is a major issue of debate at many levels of our society. The military strategies of the government have been increasingly questioned, even by such publications as the "Kerkbode". In addition, the strategic military situation, in Angola at least, has shifted against the SADF.

The state has begun to act forcefully against this resistance. ECC has effectively been banned. The penalties for failing to report and for failing to notify the SADF of a change of address have been increased and military units have been instructed to pursue conscripts who fail to report with greater vigour. It appears also that the state has decided to prosecute conscientious objectors to the full extent of the law.

In this context, the role of a service organisation such as CAS, that exists to disseminate information about the options and rights of the conscript and to encourage and help individuals who experience conscription as a moral dilemma to think about and work through the issues, becomes more important.

At present CAS only touches the lives of a very small minority of those conscripts who experience conscription as this moral dilemma. Since mid-May 62 individuals have approached us for assistance. Our task now is to go into the community in a much more concerted way and inform them that although the law

does not provide satisfactory alternatives to military service, there is always a choice and that there are a number of alternatives to consider.

In the light of this, we can state our priorities as being:

1. Entrenching our counselling structure

The components of this include:

- organising a further training course.
- facilitating the on-going training of counsellors
- ensuring that the office administration and organisation is of a high standard
- research
- an effective advertising strategy.

2. Developing a proactive education programme on the rights and options of the conscript

This would primarily involve developing a method of putting our information across in schools, universities, youth groups, parents groups etc. As a general principle we would regard it as effective to operate through other organisations who would invite us to present the programme to a workshop that they pull together.

Although these two tasks are related and complementary, it would appear practical to establish two separate working groups to undertake these tasks. The Executive Committee, consisting of the convenor, secretary, treasurer and the co-ordinators of counselling and education would have the task of overall co-ordination. It may further be necessary to have an advertising and a research sub-committee.

CONSCRIPTION ADVICE SERVICE

MINUTES OF THE NATIONAL MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONSCRIPTION ADVICE SERVICE

JOHANNESBURG, 17 - 18 SEPTEMBER 1988

1. REPORT-BACKS FROM CENTRES

Cape Town

Held an AGM last year. Realised the service was inadequate (difficult to get hold of; a small group; minimum feedback from and contact with other groups).

Goals set: recruit new counsellors,
establish efficient professional referral system,
improve publicity,
activate an education campaign.

Training course for counsellors over six weeks held earlier this year:
30 - 36 people; efficient and well-organised; built CAS's image.

A pleasant office has been opened which is open Mondays to Fridays 5.30 - 7.30 pm.
Runs on a roster system. Records kept.

Advertising: 'Weekly Mail' ad, campus, classifieds in suburban 'knock n drop' newspapers, 'calling cards'.

Education work: started work on videos on options (Board, exile, prison, going to the army); each self-contained;
participated in ECC Know Your Rights forums;
held workshop for parents.

Education work becoming a priority; more than just counselling on the agenda.

Next AGM to be held next week.

Durban

Operates with four individuals; contact numbers on pamphlets.

Don't have an office or evaluation meetings.

Links with psychologists have been set up.

One-day counsellors' training session was held. Hope to set up longer-term training system.

Good referral system to churches.

Community Servers Group is active in Durban - helps with Board cases.

Assisted in Know Your Rights meetings.

Needing to strategically reformulate the service.

Grahamstown

Still called 'GRACONS'.

Recently a 6-week counsellors' training course was held; out of this emerged a counselling group of 8 - 10.

Telephone answering machine service.

Hoping to move off-campus.

On-going educational programme a priority.
Counsellors hope to have a monthly meeting.
Excitement and enthusiasm amongst counsellors.
Many referral resources.
Overlap with Alternative Service Group.

Johannesburg

Advertising: not enough. 'Weekly Mail' ad; hand out flyers at public meetings.
Central Methodist Church office not 'user-friendly', but satisfactory in practice as is open mostly after office hours (4.30-7.00 pm Tuesdays).
Resources and log kept at office.
Monthly evaluation meeting (tied to COSG meeting); not very satisfactory.
Made contact with a psychologist who has been helpful. Short of other professional contacts.
Counselling training course held last weekend: 10-15 people.
Contact set up with Radio 702 Crisis Centre (one of their trainers attended our training course).
Have contact with Wits Counselling and Careers Unit.
CAS and COSG run together; thinking of splitting.

Pretoria

Office at St Albans Cathedral; Cathedral staff person there during the day who takes messages.
Needing to look at advertising and funds.
Have contact with psychologists.

2. 'WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO DO?'

- Provide a non-directive counselling service for worried conscripts.
- Perform the 'Know Your Rights' function that ECC used to perform.
- Educate (Pretoria found this a particular need).
- Give information, advice, education, counselling.
- Provide concern and support.
- Act as a sounding board for counsellees, with a lot of information which they would not normally have access to.
- We are not a campaign organisation making political demands.
- The information/education we provide is technical and legal (i.e. it is about options and rights; not, for example, about the war in Angola). We must be careful not to blur our boundaries - we can't do the conscientising.
- It is part of our work, for example, to tell groups of young people about their rights and options.
- Help people reflect and understand what they believe.

3. REGULARISING OF PROCEDURES

Record-keeping

A counselling record form was drawn up - Cape Town to distribute a draft.

Working principle for keeping records: make them as open as possible; exercise discretion with each particular case.

Can use a system of numbers for anonymity.

Phone counselling

why?

Policy is not to counsel or give information on the phone, but to set up face-to-face meetings as far as possible, even if all the caller requires is some information.

Confidentiality

We are committed to not revealing information about our counselees. If pressed (by military police, for example) we will enter into discussions only in the presence of a lawyer.

4. PUBLIC IMAGE OF CAS

There were feelings that:

- we are largely ineffectual;
- the public regarded ECC as the better place to go;
- we're perceived as being 'too neutral';
- unless people are candidates for the Board, we won't be of much help.

We should:

- be non-prescriptive;
- have no political line;
- give accurate information;
- not be too 'churchy'.

Expectations of counselees sometimes problematic: we are not a quick-fix set-up, which they sometimes think we are.

The standard of counselling affects our image:

- NB
- it is a necessity for counsellors to have been through a counselling training course and to regularly attend update/evaluation meetings;
 - two-person counselling probably preferable;
 - are counsellors approachable (age, dress, etc)?
 - ongoing refresher courses in counselling skills (or, for example, Lifeline courses) desirable.

We must not be too end-product oriented. Counselees must feel listened to and respected. They must have gained insight and have felt that the counselling was a success as they have been empowered to make a decision.

5. PUBLICITY AND ADVERTISING

Durban to explore putting together a media package (pamphlets, posters, calling cards, etc), by professionals if necessary.

Until the media package is ready, Jo'burg to draw up a logo/masthead with a distinctive typeface CONSCRIPTION ADVICE SERVICE and distribute for use by all centres.

Regional flexibility on cartoons, 'jingles'.

Strongly recommended that Grahamstown GRACONS change to Conscription Advice Service - Rudi will take this recommendation back to Grahamstown and have it discussed.

CAS has been included in the Human Awareness Programme's 'Bridge' information book.

The 'Weekly Mail' advert is haphazard and confused. The following format was agreed upon; Neil will see to placing it:

CONSCRIPTION ADVICE SERVICE (-new logo-) For free and independent advice on any conscription query, call (names, towns, numbers) Call-up crisis? Call up CAS!
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Pamphlet

The existing Jo'burg pamphlet was amended for use as a national pamphlet. Durban will produce the new (interim) national pamphlet, and distribute it. 15000 to be printed. Ideally black print on blue paper.

Janneke to translate the pamphlet into Afrikaans; will consult Wits Afrikaans Department on jargon terms. Durban to investigate the possibility of English and Afrikaans on the same pamphlet; if not feasible, a separate Afrikaans pamphlet (6000 copies) to be printed. If separate English and Afrikaans pamphlets are produced, each version to state on it in the other language "This pamphlet is also available in English/Hierdie pamflet is ook in Afrikaans verkrybaar".

Pamphlet to have printed on it: Issued by CAS, P O Box 15467, Vlaeberg, 8018.

Other press

Each centre responsible for trying to insert the same 'Weekly Mail' ad in other press. Regional ads may have local contact numbers only

Jo'burg to investigate 'New Nation' and church newspapers, which can be asked to insert the advert for free in the light of their church's pronouncements on the issue.

Cape Town to investigate 'Die Suid-Afrikaan'; Janneke 'Frontline'.

Centres are encouraged to write articles for local magazines and papers.

Campus radio stations - Cape Town to produce a radio ad. Jo'burg to investigate a Radio 702 ad.

6. FINANCE

Half of the money presently available is allocated to the national account for national work.

The remaining half will be distributed in equal portions to the four regions (Johannesburg/Pretoria, Durban/Pietermaritzburg, Cape Town/Stellenbosch, Grahamstown/Port Elizabeth). The longer-established centre in each region to assist the weaker centre, and together work out the distribution of their portion of the funds.

For the money which becomes available later, each of the 8 centres (rather than regions) to submit a budget to the central fund (treasurer: Janet). Each centre must bear in mind that it is applying for a limited amount, and that 50% of the funds are allocated for national work.

Janet to send a letter of thanks to the donors, and request what report-backs they require. (Treasurer to handle all such correspondence in future).

Once the new national media becomes available, it is to be sent to the donors.

Janet to send details to each centre of standard procedures for funding applications, budgets, bank accounts, etc.

Each centre to continue to raise funds locally.

CAS financial year is from 1 September to 31 August.

7. PRESS CONTACT

It is desirable that CAS develops a profile (especially amongst the press) as 'the organisation that knows the facts' (e.g., responding to Willem Steenkamp's column in Cape Town, which often contains factual inaccuracies).

Any letters sent by a centre to a newspaper to be forwarded to all the other centres.

8. NATIONAL RESOURCES

Working documents to be compiled as follows:

Cape Town - Exemption/deferment
Exile/leaving the country
Liability for service/cycles/status of foreign nationals/Dad's Army

Johannesburg - Non-combatancy

Durban - The Board

All these need to be checked with lawyers. They will start as working documents distributed to all centres; once counsellors are familiar with them, they will be discussed at national meetings and progress into manual/booklet form. The following people are to act as national resources co-ordinators:

Cape Town : Janet
Durban : Anita
Grahamstown : Rudi
Johannesburg : Neil
Pietermaritzburg : Mark Povall
Pretoria : Linda

Their responsibilities are:

to receive and distribute the working documents,
publicise their availability,
facilitate their use,

report back at national meetings.

The present Counsellors' Resource Manual

It contains 'philosophical' material which is lost in the proposed working documents.

Once the working documents are being used, the usefulness of the manual can be re-assessed. (It has been suggested that the manual needs re-writing, but its place may be taken by the new documents). COSG could look at meeting what is needed when the manual has been re-assessed.

Videos on the options

Cape Town is producing videos on the options.

The ECC Know Your Rights book

In its present form it is to be treated as one of the CAS working documents, with a view to re-doing it as one of the CAS booklets/manuals.

Neil to contact Mark as to the computer-accessibility of the booklet.

Official Documents file

It is useful for counsellors to have access to such official documents as call-up papers, etc.

All counsellors to collect such documents and bring them to next national co-ordination meeting to share with other counsellors.

9. NATIONAL CO-ORDINATION

Use of computers

Wordstar-convertible programmes are to be used for documents and papers which are to be distributed nationally.

National gathering

A national meeting, to which all CAS counsellors are invited, is to be held.

The meeting is intended for:

- development of ourselves as counsellors,
- information-sharing on counselling skills and knowledge,
- co-ordinating decisions about national structures, national committee, finances.

A working group will meet two days before to look at the working documents and papers.

Campuses to be included.

Proposed dates: 17, 18, 19 February 1989. Grahamstown to organise the venue. (Durban to serve as a back-up venue.)

Durban to draw up a draft agenda and distribute to the other centres (via the resources co-ordinator) for comment.

National convenors

David and Janet to act as national convenors. They will ensure that the national tasks are happening (up until the February meeting).

Links with other organisations

General principles:

- CAS is not an activist organisation; it is a service organisation.
- We may liaise with other organisations, but are not affiliated to them.
- We do not co-host meetings, but can come in as experts at information meetings on our particular issue.
- We can host meetings on our own.
- Advertising in publications of other organisations: we don't share media or associate ourselves with other organisations on pamphlets, but we can advertise our advice service in their publications.
- The nature of CAS's work is that it is limited; therefore CAS must stay in strict parameters.
- COSG is a better home for activists or for people wishing to do education or support work.

Campus advice services

Because of the transience of student populations, it is difficult for campus services to build up continuity and counselling expertise, or an adequate information base. They are (or were) often under ECC auspices, which is problematic in the light of decisions taken about links with other organisations.

Discussion is needed with the campus services:

- they are naturally going to be the magnet on campus for questions,
- their counsellors should be trained by CAS so that they can assist people at the first level (so that these people will not be put off),
- they must refer more serious cases to CAS,
- they must not bill themselves as CAS,
- they and CAS must have links with official university counselling services, which can refer cases to CAS, and to which CAS can refer cases for psychological counselling.

Constitution

Cape Town's constitution to be circulated to all centres.

10. SECURITY AND ETHICS

Exile

Each CAS to have one person who specialises in this area.
Principle is not to give addresses in other countries.

Follow-up

Unless a particular relationship has been established, or there are exceptional circumstances, principle is not to follow up counsellees, even if they have undertaken to come back, but have not.

Long-term psychological treatment

Each centre to build up contacts with sympathetic psychologists and psychiatrists to which we can refer counsellees for long-term treatment.

Problematic Board applicants

If a person intends blatantly lying to the Board (e.g. claiming that he is religious when he is not), we are within our rights to refuse to assist the person (apart from telling them how the Board operates).

Where people have a religious background and have simply disassociated themselves from a particular church, or where their values coincide with a religious system of values (and is in all likelihood derived from a religious background or upbringing), the task of the counsellor may be to connect such people with that religious background or upbringing. In such cases, the matter of fabricating anything for the Board (which the counsellee may have contemplated doing) does not enter as there is simply no need for it. The religious affiliation of Board applicants does not have to be as formal as church membership.

We should work with and assist people in this regard as long as we feel we could vouch for them to the Board.

A second counsellor should sit in on all discussions with such counsellees (as a witness) in the event of the counsellee making any claims to the Board about the advice he received from CAS.

Security

Counsellors have the right (in their personal capacities) to be involved in other organisations and actions (the '143', for example), but other counsellors ought to know of such involvements.

APPENDIX 1

TIME-LINE

Sept 88	Weekly Mail advert	Neil
	Logo/masthead	Neil
Oct 88	Counselling record form	Cape Town
	Finance instructions	Janet
	Constitution	Cape Town
Nov 88	Advertising 'campaign'	All
	National pamphlet	Durban
	Draft agenda for national gathering	Durban
Nov 88	Budgets	Regions, Janet
Dec 88		
Jan 89	Resource packages/working documents	All
	Design aspects	Durban
Feb 89	National budget	Cape Town
	'Official' documents	All
	Co-ordination meeting	Cape Town
	National gathering	Durban

APPENDIX 2

ADDRESS LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Cape Town

David Schmidt 35 Main Street, Newlands, Cape Town, 7700. 021 210-3918 (w)
021 242680 (h)
Janet Thorpe 207 Lingen Gardens, Camp Street, Gardens, 021 235848 (h)
Cape Town, 8001. 021 244350 (w)
CAS Cape Town P O Box 15467, Vlaeberg, 8018 021 689-1194
(5.30 - 7.30 pm)

Durban

Anita Kromberg P O Box 2861, Durban, 4000 031 301-5663 (w)
031 45-6574 (h)
Richard Steele P O Box 2861, Durban, 4000 031 301-5663 (w)

Grahamstown

Rudi Marais 7 Huntly Street, Grahamstown, 6140 0461 26067

Johannesburg

Nan Cross 17 Vulcan Street, Kensington, Johannesburg, 2094 011 614-7458 (h)
011 777-1111 x2029 (w)
Neil Mitchell Tsessebe House, 52 Robinson Street, Belgravia, 011 614-8106 (h)
Johannesburg, 2094 011 614-1938 (w)
Janneke Weidema 103 Woodford, Becker Street, Yeoville, 011 648-8921 (h)
Johannesburg, 2198 011 339-4451 (w)

Pretoria

Minnette Carstens 20 Thomson Street, Colbyn, Pretoria, 0083 012 43-5763
Davin Chown 169 Watermeyer Street, Meyers Park, Pretoria, 0184 012 83-2767 (h)
012 46-7155 (4.30 -
8.30 pm)
Linda Meulman 169 Watermeyer Street, Meyers Park, Pretoria, 0184 012 43-2175 (a.h.)

(Apologies received from Mark Povall, Pietermaritzburg)

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te gebruiken, te strekken met R100 boeke

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of postage 1.100

AMPTELIK-OFFICIAL



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advice on any conscription
query call the Conscription
Advice Service  689-1194

crisis?

Call-up

Concerned about your call up?

Call up CAS !

Ph 301-5663

CAS

Box 2861

Dbn

4000

MINUTES OF THE DURBAN CONSCRIPTION ADVICE SERVICE HELD ON THE
7th OF NOVEMBER 1988

PRESENT : Paul Graham, Richard Steele, Anita Kromberg, Rob Goldman.

1. The meeting agreed with the constitution in principle. It will be put for ratification at the AGM (see pt. 12).
2. It was suggested that a document containing a set of working principles for counsellors be drawn up. The working principles should include the need for regular case study meetings, and guidelines on when to refer counselees for professional help. It was not suggested who would do this.
3. It was agreed that a telephone tree for counsellors would be established. It was not decided who would do this.
4. It was proposed that CAS takes over occupation of the ECC office in conjunction with COSG w.e.f 1.1.89. This will be put to COSG at their next meeting.
5. It was agreed to use the counselling record sheet with immediate effect. Will evaluate later. Each counsellor to number their sheets using the initials of their first and surnames with consecutive numbering. eg Anita's first counselee's sheet will be numbered AK1, the second, AK2.....AK47 etc.
6. Richard and Anita's work no. to be provisionally used for national advertisements.
7. Durban will advertise in local suburban newspapers and the Sunday Tribune from now until the February call-up. Also to investigate the Daily News 'Tonight' section. Rob to action.
8. We recommend that Jhb places a national ad in the Sunday Times, and correct the Durban contact name and number in the Weekly Mail ad.
9. A certain level of competence for counsellors was necessary. To facilitate this we agreed on the following:
 - an initial assessment interview for all prospective counsellors, where the most appropriate training programme for them would be worked out;
 - new counsellors would undergo a probationary period;
 - Lifeline training courses could be a resource;
 - we should run workshops for first-line people, eg clergy;
 - ongoing in-service training for ourselves, open to others eg LRC, OASSA, prospective counsellors.

10. Counsellors could develop expertise in a specific area of counselling to which they had an affinity, eg the Board, exile. This expertise could then be shared with the rest of us at an in-service training.

11. The meeting mandated Anita and Richard to complete the national pamphlet and set the agenda for the next national meeting.

12. Our next meeting will be our official launch in Durban, in the form of an AGM. It will be at 7.30pm on the 29th of November in the Peace Room. The agenda will include:

- adopt the constitution
- elect a committee
- make decisions re the office
- advertise future counsellor training meetings
- recruitment of members.

Work to be done:

- Richard to book Peace Room and invite psychologists/DASSA, LRC, campus counselling service;
- Rob to invite COSG, NCSG, and people at the Conscription workshop;
- someone to invite Durban Mental Health and DDA (what about Sash, Diakonia - a thought from the typist);
- Anita to organise tea and rusks.

Through a process of drawing lots Richard ended up having to chair the AGM, and Rob the taking of minutes.

The meeting ended happily, and exactly on time.

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- someone to invite Durban Mental Health and DDA (what about Sash, Diakonia - a thought from the typist);
- Anita to organise tea and rusks.

Through a process of drawing lots Richard ended up having to chair the AGM, and Rob the taking of minutes.

The meeting ended happily, and exactly on time.

**MINUTES OF THE NATIONAL MEETING
OF THE CONSCRIPTION ADVICE SERVICE
Held in Cape Town on 16 February 1992**

PRESENT :	Linda Meulman	(Pretoria)
	Neil Mitchell	(Johannesburg)
	Roddy Payne	(Johannesburg)
	Janneke Weidema	(Johannesburg)
	Richard Steele	(Durban)
	Anita Kromberg	(Durban)
	Therese Boulle	(Port Elizabeth)
	Jonathan Elliot	(East London)
	Daryl Mclean	(Grahamstown)
	Janet Thorpe	(Cape Town)
	Gill Kerchoff	(Cape Town)
	Carol Homes	(Cape Town)
	Anton Eberhardt	(Cape Town)
	Jude Cornell	(Cape Town)
	Fran Biggs	(Cape Town)
	Neil Myburgh	(Cape Town)
	Alan Dodson	(C.T. Lawyer)
	Rev Rob Robertson	(Observer)
	Stephen Zintle	(Observer - ECC)

The meeting started with reports from the regions represented:

- CAPE TOWN** : There is someone in the office from 6.00 - 7.00 on Monday and Tuesday evenings. There has been a marked increase in calls since the repeal of the Population Registration Act but 99% of these calls are men who, seeing an easy way out of a hassle, want to be reassured that they can ignore their call-up - actually doing the required service is not a moral crisis of any kind. This has exacerbated already low energy levels in all counsellors with the result that Cape Town CAS will be doing some serious reevaluation of itself very soon.
- JOHANNESBURG** : This region has suffered most from the increase in calls, a lot of which are referred by ECC. The office is still open on a Tuesday afternoon and calls are taken by Neil and farmed out to other counsellors as necessary.
- DURBAN** : Also an increasingly busy practice.
- EAST LONDON** : Has been non-existent since the previous counsellors left town but will be viable again now that Jonathan has moved there. The contact number is at present the Black Sash office.

- PRETORIA** : Has received proportionately the most "troubled conscript" calls as well as only hassled ones. The latter take their stand mostly on the basis of the "racial call-up" position. Two counsellors handle the bulk of the work and are kept very busy. Has had to deal with cases involving harassment of objectors and their families by M.P.s. A few suspicious calls have also been received and met with very legalistic answers.
- GRAHAMSTOWN** : The previous contact person has moved to Queenstown and is keen to provide a service there. A number of calls are being received and the intention is to hold an information session for counsellors (including the Rhodes Student Advisor, local Lifeline people, ECC and Sash, the Streetlaw Project and local school guidance counsellors). Re-advertising will also be done.
- PORT ELIZABETH** : Calls are increasing here too, also with few moral dilemmas but lots of irritation with the system.

After this, Alan Dodson led a discussion on the current legal situation.

The salient points were:

The Defence Act is still in force and opinion is that the upcoming challenge to it will in all likelihood fail. The draft legislation amending the Act, based on the recommendations of the Gleeson committee, will probably be published this year. This will expand the range of objectors recognised by the Act and make the system of conscription comparable to that in many Western countries. Prosecutions could then increase on the strength of this new-found respectability. So conscription could therefore be around for quite a while still!

At the moment failure to report is being handled internally by the military. The "worst-case" scenario for failure to report is a fine of community service so the cost is relatively minimal. Personal anxiety and harassment are the only risks. It was observed, though, that in the smaller conservative country areas, these prosecutions are still being handle through the magistrates court.

The next discussion centred on the future of CAS in the light of the developments already discussed. As with the previous discussion, I've simply jotted down the points and decisions made without trying to put them into structured form.

The first position expressed was that CAS is catering mainly for people who are not morally opposed to their call-up but are simply hoping for an easy way out of it. If there isn't one, they would do their camp feeling irritated and inconvenienced but not morally compromised. CAS was formed originally to counsel the reluctant conscript who objected to serving on moral grounds and it no longer seems to serve this purpose. The result, especially in Cape Town, is that counsellors are no longer fulfilling their original motivations for their involvement in CAS and are ambivalent about continuing the type of service offered at present.

The responses to this indicated that other regions were not nearly so negative.

These were inter alia:

People are still needing advice and that as long as conscription continues there will be a need for CAS. Even people who are only "hassled" are still eroding the system and are therefore important. CAS helps to empower the conscript against a system which controls largely through ignorance. Most people are ignorant of their rights and their position and CAS is, for our callers, the only counter to this on a personal level.

CAS is now reaping the benefits of one call a month. Any reason, even not wanting to leave one's family, is a good reason not to go. CAS should not judge conscripts reasons.

An 087 number was considered as a future option. Messages giving the information required by almost all callers was seen as a way out of the drudgery of advice work. But as the personal contact with callers was seen to be a valuable component of our services, it was felt that contact numbers should still be provided at the end of messages.

This option was considered worth investigating. Johannesburg undertook to look into the logistics of it and report back to other centres. Cape Town will get their lawyers to vet the messages if it reaches that stage.

When the expected amendment to the Defence Act (based on Gleeson's recommendations) is introduced, we should pay for a legal opinion on it. The Cape Town CAS committee is extremely burnt out and have none willing to be a full time contact person/coordinator. This shows up CAS's difficulty in reproducing itself, which some regions are addressing.

The question as to under what circumstances CAS should cease to exist was posed. The feeling was that if conscription ended or we ran out of money we would disband. If conscription ended and CAS still got calls, then another group (eg. COSG) could take over that responsibility.

Richard is to send a letter to the relevant CODESA sub-committee pointing out the unviability of conscription under an interim government. Robby will help.

Jonathan will be the national conference person and will organise the next tele-conference when necessary.

Neil in Johannesburg will be the national treasurer henceforth.

Cape Town (if it continues) and Johannesburg will keep accounts. All other regions who do not use/need local accounts will close these and send the balances to the national account.

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END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

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